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Refranes y Cantares Geográficos de España. A Lecture by Gabriel María Vergara. (Real Sociedad geográfica, Madrid, 1906. Vol. XLVII.)

This most interesting lecture has one defect. It is too short! After perusing it we feel an appetite for more. No country in the world is so rich in popular proverbs and folk-songs as Spain. The meridional character of its people and the great diversity in their origin, coupled, in former times, with local segregation, may be one of the reasons for it. The lecturer, who pronounced this very interesting discourse before the Royal Geographical Society at Madrid in March, 1906, has only grazed the enormous field open to investigation and enjoyment in Spanish folk-literature, though the knowledge of it has hardly reached beyond the domain of the Spanish language. In its own country, however, it has not been neglected by students, and its importance as a storehouse of popular knowledge in numerous branches, was recognized as early as 1834 by Don Fermin Cavallero. The number of works illustrating such topics is not small, neither have the results derived from the study of proverbs and songs been inconsiderable. The author justly says of them: The proverbs and songs are abbreviated forms (formulas) of popular science, (they) constitute the true popular Encyclopedia in which all branches of knowledge are represented . . . " These characterizations are fully justified by the examples given.

Señor Vergara begins with such sayings as embody criticisms of one or more localities by the inhabitants of another. If these (he remarks) were all to be believed, "there would not be, in Spain, a single district whose inhabitants are not ingrates, replete with vanity, silly, vindictive, bad friends, venal, thieves; in short, who would not have one or more qualities compelling them to be shunned like the very demons." To such exaggerations of a negative character he opposes numerous specimens of praise and encomium bestowed in popular song on places and their inhabitants. Costume and customs are alluded to frequently, and the local colour imparted is of special interest. Finally, there is the vast field of geographic information of the most varied kind, which the author illustrates forcibly. But that field is so vast that time and space have failed him and we are left to consult other sources for more on the subject so attractively presented by Señor Vergara. He fortunately gives the titles of the principal works on "Refranes" (Proverbs) and "Cantares" (Songs), of which the one by Don Carlos Puente y Ubeda, the first volume of which treats of Climatology as represented in popular lore (Madrid, 1896), is the most recent thorough specimen. Its publication has relieved Señor Vergara from the task of including in his lecture that particular side of Spanish songs and proverbs. The "Refranero Meteorológico de la Península Ibérica" by Puente y Ubeda is almost unique. A. F. B.

The Mohammedan World of To-day. Edited by S. M. Zwemer, E. M. Wherry, and James L. Barton. New York, London, etc., F. H. Revell Co., 1906. Pp. 295.

The reader who hopes to find in this book a full treatment of the Mohammedan world as it exists to-day will be disappointed. He will, however, find many geographic facts of high value, much in regard to the relation of Mohammedanism to Christian missions, and a few broad generalizations, together with excellent statistics. The book consists of a series of nineteen papers presented by their authors at the First Missionary Conference on behalf of the Mohammedan World, held at Cairo in April, 1906. Each of the countries where followers of

the Prophet live is dealt with briefly, and emphasis is given to political, educational and social, as well as religious conditions. Politically only 16 per cent. of the Mohammedans of the world are under rulers of their own faith; 14 per cent. are under other non-Christian rulers, chiefly in China; and the remaining 70 per cent. are under Christian rule or protection. As one author says:

The European Governments generally adopt an attitude of neutrality or toleration toward all religions, Mohammedanism among them. Yet it is to be noted that from country after country the report comes that, on political grounds, these nations are led to adopt a policy which specially favours Mohammedanism.

Education appears to be making but slight progress, for in most cases over 90 per cent. of the people are said to be still illiterate. Nevertheless, the Turks and others, of their own initiative, are endeavouring to establish a modern system of education, chiefly, it seems, for fear that otherwise the brightest children will be sent to Christian schools and will cease to be zealous Moslems. Movements for religious and social reform are mentioned in Egypt, Syria, Persia, and India; but only the Persian movement seems to have been at all successful. Beginning as Babism this movement has lately become known as that of Behai. It enjoins monogamy, prohibits divorce, and inculcates honesty and religious toleration. Its defenders claim for it 1,000,000 adherents. According to its detractors it is almost as bad as the old style of Mohammedanism, and has only 200,000 followers at most.

In summing up the present condition of the followers of Islam one writer says:

It may be that these nations are what they are because of their racial character, even more than because of their religion; but those who know them best think that their natural qualities are their best qualities, and that their worst qualities are those which spring from their religion.

A perusal of the book as a whole does not fully support this conclusion. In many cases racial traits prevail over the better teachings of religion. For instance, a notable characteristic of the Mohammedan of India is his caste-feeling, his aloofness from people of other religions, whose food he will not touch, although most Mohammedans eat freely with all sorts of people. Again, the writers of the chapters on the East Indies emphasize the fact that there the people are at heart much the same as they were in the old fetish-worshipping days before Islam had been grafted upon paganism. Among the 30,000,000 followers of the Prophet in China the failure of Mohammedanism during nearly a thousand years to eradicate or even alter racial traits incompatible with the precepts of that religion is notable. To quote from the chapter on China:

Mosques are found in many cities; . . . but there is apparently little interest taken in the services. . . . As regards outward observances, the distinguishing features of Mohammedans in China are their abstinence from idol-worship, and their observance of the prohibition against the eating of pork. . . . Other important tenets, such as circumcision, almsgiving and fasting, are also observed; but there appears to be an entire absence of that fanaticism, proud exclusiveness, uncompromising orthodoxy, and thirst for proselytism which so distinguish the Moslem in countries nearer home.

Immorality of the most degrading sort is mentioned in several chapters as the greatest evil connected with Mohammedanism, but it is noticeable that little is said of it in India, the East Indies, China, and the parts of Africa inhabited by negroes. Of course, it exists in all these places as a frightful curse, but not in the aggravated form in which it is found in Turkestan, Baluchistan, Persia, Arabia, and northern Africa. These lands are inhabited by various races—Mongoloid, Aryan, and Semitic—but they are alike in being extremely dry, far more so than the Mohammedan lands where immorality is less flagrant. The question at once arises whether climatic conditions may not have more to do with morality

than is generally supposed, and whether the attitude of Mohammedanism toward morality is not due largely to the physical conditions under which that religion originated.

Mohammedanism is not gaining converts except in West Africa, nor is it losing by conversions to Christianity. Estimates as to the total number of Moslems in the world to-day vary from 175 to 300 million. In the final chapter the number is given as 233 million, about one-seventh of the population of the world. E. H.

Geschichte des deutschen Bodens mit seinem Pflanzen- und Tierleben. Von J. Wimmer. Halle a. S., Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1905.

The evolution of the soil of Germany and its products, from the earliest times to the present, is one of the subjects bordering on geography and history alike, and therefore the students of both these sciences are bound to be indebted to the author for his careful and minute researches into these subjects. In the first part he deals with the history of the soil proper; in the second, with that of its flora and fauna. The former is the more directly geographical, while the latter will be found a rich mine of reference for botanists and zoologists for all kinds of questions pertaining to animal and plant species, living or extinct, of that region.

The author differentiates between "Wildboden" (uncultivated soil) and "Kulturboden" (cultivated soil), and the transition from the former to the latter forms the history of the soil. In this four stages or periods can be distinguished: (1) the Celto-Romanic or primitive condition; (2) the period of the migration of the nations; (3) the conquest of the wildernesses from 600-1300 A.D.; (4) extension and transformation of the cultivated area, from the 14th to the 19th century.

The primeval aspect of the country has been described by Julius Cæsar and Tacitus as being characterized by its dense woods. They covered the mountain ranges and extended downward from them into the lower country; and it is significant that the Latin texts, in describing German topography, always use the words "*saltus*" or "*sylvæ*" in place of "*montes*." This will easily explain why so many German mountains have the name of "Forest" even now: "Black Forest," etc. From these reports, however, the erroneous conception has been formed of old Germania having been an unbroken forest wilderness. The mere fact that even in those primitive times almost inexhaustible herds of Germanic origin were pouring forth again and again into the Roman provinces proves it cannot have been so, because an unbroken forest land could not support such a comparatively large population. It cannot be assumed, either, that at those early times the inhabitants had cleared enough land to support them, because primitive man will not clear the soil unless he has learned beforehand the value of the soil as the producer of his food. It follows that the primeval forest, in its original aspect, must have been interspersed in many places with openings or glades where a spontaneous growth of plants fit to eat taught man to improve upon nature by a primitive form of agriculture. Such open spaces, which must have been quite densely populated, could not be found in the valleys of the rivers, because in those times the valleys were unhealthy and practically uninhabitable, but rather on the higher and drier land at or near the base of the mountains, and historical researches have proved the truth of this hypothesis. The traces of the earliest settlements have been discovered on the Bavarian Plateau, along the fall line at the eastern border of the upper Rhine Valley, and on the plains of Central Germany near the